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Viewing cable 07ATHENS171, "REVOLUTIONARY STRUGGLE" MANIFESTO CLAIMS

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Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
07ATHENS171	2007-01-25 16:24	2011-08-30 01:44	SECRET	Embassy Athens

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S E C R E T ATHENS 000171

SIPDIS

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/23/2017
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [GR](#)
SUBJECT: "REVOLUTIONARY STRUGGLE" MANIFESTO CLAIMS
RESPONSIBILITY FOR EMBASSY RPG ATTACK

REF: A) ATHENS 77 B) ATHENS 94 C) ATHENS 95 D) STATE

SUMMARY

¶1. (S) On January 24, the left-wing group "Revolutionary Struggle" officially claimed responsibility for the January 12 RPG attack on the Embassy in a manifesto passed to the weekly Greek newspaper "Pondiki." The statement cites opposition to U.S. foreign policy as the motive for the attack -- and, by specifically criticizing FM Bakoyannis and Minister of Public Order Polydoras, appears to mark them as potential future targets. The statement's focus on Greek public figures and institutions supports the argument both the U.S. and GOG have made since January 12: that this was an attack on both U.S. and Greek interests. Public reaction since the RPG attack appears to support this view, a change from the tacit public acceptance of domestic terrorist incidents. While there has been some political fallout for the Karamanlis government, this too has been comparatively restrained.

¶2. (S) Greek authorities are undertaking a comprehensive, professional and high priority investigation of the January 12 PRG attack on the Chancery. The two-way information flow has been good, and U.S. agencies' representatives have good access. We have shared all relevant information in our hands with Greek authorities, and are confident that they have shared their information equally fully with us. The investigation is proceeding along several tracks. Our main concern is constant press leaks -- likely the consequence of political and personal rivalries in an election year -- that have hampered the investigations effectiveness, primarily by the near-identification of the chief suspect. Ambassador and DCM have emphasized to both government and top PASOK officials that such leaks work against both U.S. and Greek interests. A second attack might be in the offing, based on analysis of past incidents, but may be against a Greek government target. Embassy has requested and received funding for 24-hour surveillance detection and will shortly submit recommendations to address the Embassy's greatest security challenge: offices situated only 65 feet from a major Athens avenue. END SUMMARY.

REVOLUTIONARY STRUGGLE ISSUES ITS MANIFESTO

¶3. (S) Authorities have been anticipating a statement from "Revolutionary Struggle;" the explanatory manifesto was received by the Greek weekly tabloid "Pondiki" following an anonymous call. "Revolutionary Struggle" claims the attack was in reponse to U.S. policies in Palestine, Lebanon, and Iraq, also citing detainees in Guantanamo. It contains invective against "CIA and FBI agents and assassins" housed at U.S. Embassies, and suggests that the Greek National Police's Counter-Terrorism Unit houses "American agents."

¶4. (S) In addition, the lengthy document criticizes Greek officials and institutions. Its opening paragraph refers to the Foreign Minister as "the slave of the Americans, Bakoyiannis," and implies that Minister of Public Order Polydoras is also too close to the U.S. While there are no explicit threats against either, the mention of both by name suggests they are potential targets. But they are not the only ones. The manifesto blasts the "extraordinary military 'tribunals'" and the judges currently presiding over the appeal of the November 17 terrorists. It adds that, if "Revolutionary Struggle" had its way, the first building that would be torn down would be the U.S. Embassy, the second would be the Greek parliament, perhaps suggesting that MPs are also possible targets.

¶5. (S) In contrast to the manifestos issued by the earlier terrorist group "17 November," the document does not provide details of how the attack was organized and executed. The style is also different, shorter, less ideological and more direct/journalistic. Some have interpreted this as a sign that the group's members have a lower level of education than some of 17N's leaders. The Minister of Public Order told us

he thought the writer had media experience.

INVESTIGATION RUNNING ON SEVERAL TRACKS

¶16. (S) Since the investigation began on January 12, it has proceeded along several tracks. The first has focused on a prominent Greek anarchist with a police record who is seen as the most logical suspect. This investigation is being handled by an extremely restricted group within the police department. However, the fact that the individual was described thoroughly (identified in all but name) in the January 14 press has complicated police tracking efforts.

¶17. (S) The second line of inquiry, pursued by a broader police working group, is focused on interviewing witnesses, checking phone records of those offering information, and tracking the origin of the Chinese RPG used in the attack. Police believe that the RPG, which was not a type purchased by any GOG entity, was likely among those looted from Albanian arsenals during 1997. (Greek officials report positive cooperation with counterparts in Tirana and Skopje.) Police also have high expectations (perhaps overly so) for what FBI enhancement of surveillance video shot by Embassy cameras may reveal when analysis is completed later this week.

¶18. (S) Third, police are pursuing pieces of information (some potentially credible, some clearly not) that indicates the attackers may have come from outside Greece, and were therefore not the standard-issue Greek radicals most have assumed them to be. The "Revolutionary Struggle" manifesto may challenge this thesis. Embassy RSO, Legatt, and SIMO are working together closely on all aspects of the investigation, meeting regularly with the Greek police teams involved.

¶19. (S) Recently, both police and press have speculated that another attack might take place soon. This is based on past incidents of domestic terrorism; the terrorist group "November 17" generally instigated two-three incidents prior to claiming responsibility in a written statement. Press sources note that RPGs are usually packaged in groups of six; presuming that some were used for "target practice," the theory is that this would leave several still available for subsequent attacks. Some accounts have even stretched the line of speculation further, suggesting that the next targets might be GOG ministries. While there is no firm basis for such speculation, the possibility of course cannot be ruled out.

BUT POLITICALLY-MOTIVATED PRESS LEAKS HAMPER EFFECTIVENESS

¶10. (S) Although impressed with the energy and thoroughness of the investigation, we have been disappointed by leaks from PASOK-affiliated police officers directly to Greek media -- which has been constant since day one. While in most cases the details leaked are insignificant, the near-identification of a primary suspect has, without doubt, hampered the overall investigation.

¶11. (S) Politics is clearly behind the leaks. With elections this year, after the RPG attack opposition PASOK contrasted its record with the New Democracy government -- reminding the public that its administration had succeeded in breaking the back of Greece's biggest domestic terrorist threat, "November 17" (a group responsible for decades of violent attacks, including the killing of 5 Americans). PASOK-aligned journalists jumped on board, criticizing Karamanlis for purportedly re-structuring the police counter-terrorism team. The criticism seemed to hit home when Karamanlis asked former Anti-Terrorist Squad Chief Syros to take on the job again (in addition to his current responsibilities as Deputy Chief of Police). (We think Karamanlis made the assignment in the perhaps unrealistic hope of obtaining political peace, and to show he was leaving no stars on the bench.) But Syros -- whose links to PASOK were formed while serving under former PASOK Minister of Public Order Chrysochoides -- is also fighting for survival in the police force's promotion cycle this March. While we

respect his experience and conduct of the investigation itself, we assess that he is a major source of press leaks, which are designed to bolster his own public image and win a promotion.

AMBASSADOR TO MPO, OPPOSITION: STOP THE LEAKS NOW

¶12. (S) On January 19 Ambassador conveyed to Minister of Public Order Polydoros (through MPO diplomatic advisor Ailianos) that, while the Embassy was satisfied with the overall level of cooperation, we were concerned that press leaks were harming the investigation. The leaks could clearly delay the apprehension of the perpetrators, and worked against both U.S. and Greek interests. Also on January 19, Ambassador delivered the same message to opposition leader George Papandreou. DCM and SIMO Chief reached out to former MPO Chrysochoides (Minister under the PASOK government, leaving office in 2004), stressing that while the Embassy was not taking sides in the on-going political/factional struggle now being played out in the press, we were very concerned that the struggle, and, most importantly, the leaks were impairing an effective investigation. On January 21, DCM passed our assessment to PM Karamanlis through diplomatic advisor Bitsios.

CONTINUED FOCUS ON EMBASSY SECURITY

¶13. (S) In order to keep the Embassy community fully informed, Ambassador hosted a Town Hall meeting for Embassy employees on January 15. The country team has emphasized to all employees the need to review security practices, both at the Embassy and at their residence. All employees have been advised to vary times and routes; the Ambassador, DCM and other recognizable Embassy officials will be particularly cognizant of this requirement. Embassy requested (ref C) and received (ref D) funding for immediate implementation of 24-hour surveillance detection teams. In addition, Embassy will shortly submit a cable of both short and long-term recommendations on how OBO and DS can contribute to our mutual goal of hardening Embassy security at its most vulnerable point -- offices located 65 feet from the major Vassilisis Sofias thoroughfare.

PUBLIC REACTION: ATTACK BAD FOR U.S., BAD FOR GREECE

¶13. (S) While some press reports have dug deep into the details of election-year political scapegoating, overall the attack appears to be viewed not only as an attack on the U.S. but also on Greece -- a point the Embassy has stressed from the outset. That does not mean that the Greek public's anti-Americanism has lessened significantly. However, it appears that, after the arrest and trial of key members of noted left-wing terrorist group "17 November" and the successful staging of the Olympic Games, the Greek "person on the street" no longer has the same level of tolerance for domestic terrorism. One recent opinion poll suggests that 6 of 10 Greeks now support increased use of surveillance cameras to deter crime. That is a turnaround for a Greek public allergic to all forms of "Big Brother" monitoring.

COMMENT

¶14. (S) Some media have questioned whether, as a result of the January 12 attack, the U.S. will refuse to consider extending participation in the Visa Waiver Program to Greece. The Embassy has avoided public response on this point. There is no evidence that Greek terrorists past or present had or have the means or intention to undertake terrorist activities outside of Greece. In fact, any attempt to do so would be to operate without the terrorists' key advantages: relative anonymity and a support network. In any case, at this point we are broadly satisfied with the professionalism and pace of the investigation and consider it important to keep the VWP perspective open. Any presumptive shut-off of VWP consideration would likely backfire, generating political resentment and impeding bilateral cooperation on this case.

